

I claim:

1. An airborne reconnaissance system comprising:

an airborne vehicle having a fuselage and wings capable of being removed from the fuselage, the airborne vehicle including an onboard video camera and video signal transmitter and a flight control system to remotely control a flight of the airborne vehicle from a remote location;

a launch system including a launch rail having a longitudinal axis comprised of at least two sections including connector means for connecting the at least two sections; and

a container capable of receipt thereinto of the airborne vehicle with the wings removed from the fuselage and the launch rail thereof.
2. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the container is backpackable and includes straps.
3. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the container is weatherproof.
4. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the container defines an interior and the interior includes foam.
5. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the container further includes a pivoting lid.
6. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the launch rail member is rectangular in cross-section.

7. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the launch system includes a gas propellant.
8. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1 wherein the launch system includes at least one elastic cord.
9. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 8, wherein the launch system further includes legs for supporting the launch rail member with respect to a support surface.
10. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 8, wherein the launch system includes a carriage for slideable receipt onto the launch rail member, the carriage for engagement with the airborne vehicle.
11. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 10, wherein the launch system includes a trigger for releasably engaging the carriage to the launch rail member.
12. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 8, wherein the launch rail member includes at least one pulley.
13. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 8, wherein the wings of the airborne vehicle define a biplane.
14. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 13, wherein the wings further include endplates.

15. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 8, wherein the airborne vehicle further includes a global positioning system unit and an antenna for transmitting global positioning system unit signals to a remote location.
16. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the airborne vehicle further includes a parachute and a storage container capable of at least partially enclosing the parachute and capable of being received into the fuselage thereof.
17. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, further including a pan and tilt mechanism wherein the camera of the airborne vehicle is mounted on the pan and tilt mechanism.
18. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 8, wherein the fuselage and the wings of the airborne vehicle are at least partly constructed from one or more of the following: carbon fiber, titanium, stainless steel, aluminum, or balsa wood.
19. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the airborne vehicle includes an engine and the engine has a generator engaged therewith for generating electricity.
20. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the airborne vehicle includes an engine and the engine is capable of running on a mixture of gas and oil.
21. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 10, wherein the launch rail member includes means to absorb the acceleration energy of the carriage as the carriages reaches the end of the launch rail member.

22. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 10, further including shear pins for engaging the fuselage of the airborne vehicle to the carriage.
23. The airborne reconnaissance system of Claim 1, wherein the launch rail member includes at least two sections hinged together.